Speak to the Clouds

Laurette Tanner

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EARTH

You're in love with shadows,
I'm a woman of earth,
with the muscles and bones
and blood to give birth.
You're a skeleton,
a puzzle,
a treasure
of thought;
seeking, uneasily
a love
that is taught.
The love we're starting with
will continue to grow,
by twinkles in our eyes
and other ways to know –
For I gather your shadows
and substance,
draw them to me
and stretch them to fit your frame
where they should be.

PLUMS

My love, I love
your back so tall and strong.
I like to massage it
with my fingertips
as sharply as an ice-pick,
as gently as a cats lick.
I like to see your whole frame
undressed without shame.
I like to ride your wild horse,
and sing until my throat is hoarse.
I like to pick plums together,
your moving hands
as soft as feathers.
With you I like to be undone,
till we are put back as one.

CHILDS PLAY

Don't be wistful about tomorrow –
see the stars up in the sky,
one day you'll know your answers
but then you'll wonder why
dreams were long in coming &
perhaps then give a sigh,
for childs play has come to stay
and wonder to abide.

ODE TO THE POETS

To the poets
who are now long since dead,
that made rhymes in
ribbons and knots
with their heads –
and who have become dust
as we certainly all must.
The rhythms live,
though your reasons are dead –
because you've left in them
all you wanted said.

SPEAK TO THE CLOUDS

bring forth their rain –
then dance in the river
that heals all your pain.

listen to grass grow
tall in summer fields –
hear the sounds of softness,
allow your love to yield.

test yourself for greatness,
play wiser games –
call to the child within you,
and go safely through the flames.

GREY RAIN

The rain, washing
down streets, mirrors
your eyes far away,
grey like the rain.
Your head is turned
half in shadow, half
in light. – One
day I'll sail on
the grey seas of
your eyes, and
dance upon the deck, drunk
and with a sigh.

DON'T CRY, BABY

I don't know why
we go to the moon
when we can't even fly.

If I knew that
I would know many things;
Like why God gave us hands
and gave the birds wings.

THE DISCOUNT MAP

writing rhymes
of seasons and reasons
is a way of charting weather.
Try to know – somehow –
when it's going to rain.

Map experience
and figure the cost.

Nothing is free
and sometimes half-off.

A VOICE

Intolerant is he
who has decided we
are each a separate voice
alone, without the choice –
to bond together hands
in faith across the lands,
All religions are the same –
We but call them different names.

ANCIENT

I have such power within me,
She moves her tough, gnarled hands
to play porpoise in the ocean,
to build dunes upon the sand.

I've learned my own life,
says her careful heart.
I knew time was but a moment
and the Here and Now is Art.

I knew a tree once as a sapling,
thinks her ancient mind –
that I watered through the droughts,
I thought it to be kind.

CHANGE PATTERNS

see your feet dance?
they are connected to your
toes, those
mobile digits which wiggle
in delight; those supple
digits which keep us upright.

NEEDS

You're not the person I once loved;
there's nothing in your way or words-
to show that once upon a time
we sang like whales and flew like birds.
There's not a flower on a stem
or a bough upon a tree
that does not evoke a tenderness
or unmake my need.

QUIT

You great son-of-a-bitch,
you found me and scratched your itch.
Now I beg of you to quit.
You've used me like a horse you'd hit –
Open mouth, insert the bit.

You use your courage and cocksman stance
to crow over me with an offered chance
of joining in a marriage dance.
You think your footing's on solid ground,
but I won't be the bride you've found.

AT THE END

It's the period at the end of a sentence,
it's the after-dinner drink,
it's the pause before a word
that makes me stop and think.
It's the way you hold your carriage,
it's a stumble in my mind,
that cautions me towards marriage,
if words are all I find.

GUITAR

My guitar plays the wind,
songs played with sleath,
a treasure in the playing,
it sings like a thief.
Words, stolen, rend
a cloth of ill-repair –
Then chords gather strength
and harmony is there.

SOLITUDE

at dawn I rose,
all day long painted,
a scene of mountains
with a valley painted in.

the phone rang twice,
once a wrong #,
the other an invitation
for a subscription.

it's not that artists
are islands, afloat
with palm trees.
it's that responsible painting
requires
solitude of me.

and daylight, where
mistakes and tone
really show, so
i painted the day thru
'til twilight's gentle glow.
then night intruded,
without a stitch of clothes.

BRIDGE

If you take time to
write something down,
pay attention to
more than how it sounds.
Your deepest depths, your personal tests,
may be pointed out,
in a whisper or a shout.
Your daydreams and nightdreams
are fodder for
these sketches written down with effort or ease.
It's quality, not quantity,
that should result, something
in which your self can exult –
something tempered like a bridge made of steel,
something made up,
something real.

SONG

Darkness and light
are two words the same.

One is washed air after a rain,
the other the starlight in a black night.
One is pain of things one has seen,
the other the promise of things
growing green.
  One is the insight that growing
  can bring, and one's a song, my
song, is sing.

TREES

If you have only one
center of calm
(circle of intent &
compass of silver,)
stay among the trees
for they're not bothered by
a storm.

LONG AGO WAS A WISE MAN

He played a waiting game
for his lovely lady love,
then one day she came.
She had dirt under her fingernails
and live snakes for hair;
His mouth opened in awe,
he'd never seen one more fair.
Well, there is more here than meets the eye,
at least in my mind,
for the moral of this poem is
there is beauty in any love we find.

INK

Write, I said, I think
to the pen.
It drew a fine map for
me in the end.
Where it had
been I
couldn't have
said, it
left me at home
and went on instead.
It's there to be easily read,
I think –
but the damn
thing wrote in
invisible ink.

LIBRA

for every seed, birth;
every tree, earth;
every tear, its mirth;
every scale, its worth.

THE GARDEN

my love will come, my love
belongs beside me in my arms
so strong & sure & lively, too
it's he alone that i will woo.

see the roses climbing up
along the garden gate
so still with color and fragrant dew-
it's here i sit and wait.

he's sat on this step so
many times, and waited for my voice
& now i sit here patiently
abiding by his choice.

it's spring and now the buds are out,
i'll leave if he's too late;
water the garden, walk away
and leave love up to fate.

LOOKING BACK

I wish you had seen
me when I was young-
with a mind of beauty
for which songs were sung;
Hair as fine
and soft as sand,
with life poised
within my hands.
As my face grew smiles
through years of love
and grew out of sadness
from sorrow my tears
turned into knowledge learned.
Where once had been wonder,
where once had been grace –
The first became knowledge,
the second, old lace.

SATIRE

at the opening of silence
the critics stood in
ecstatic ovation.

when the savior arrived,
the brave fled, the foolish
knelt.

at the closing of death,
all concerned said a
prayer.

when silence stood up,
it let out a great
burp.

TIME

Time comes,
time goes –
but where it is
nobody knows.

Every day, every hour
we are busy living lives,
being good mothers,
being great wives.

It's gone in a second &
it comes in a blink,
but it's there whenever
we have a second to think.

All these special moments
that go to make up time
all make them ours,
and so make them mine.

THE CLEANERS

They're asking for a ransom
and they've done it every time
so I've mortgaged myself to
a dinner of bread, cheese and wine.
They're holding my clothes hostage,
all for seven dollars, they say.
I'd rather get them later, but
the ticket says today.
What the heck-
It does not expensive
when I've nothing left to wear,
because how can I go to work
when my little butt is bare.

OUR LOVE

You are my friend,
you are my lover
both out of and
under the covers.
when I'm with you
i rejoice
that we are each
other's choice.
with you I dance,
for you I sing
in the pleasure that
your company brings.
with a simple thing
like a hand outstretched
in
my heart our love is etched.

TO LOREN FROM LORRY

I've loved a man while rain came
from the sky; I thought
him a shaman as
I looked into his eyes. I
feel him sometimes
out there where
I see birds go by.
I close my eyes,
relax my mind, and
in my own way, fly.

ANIMALS

He was dressed all in leather,
and his glance touched me
like a feather.
It said, “will you
follow me home tonight
and see my mask by candlelight?
I’ll strip myself before your gaze
& lick your nose in the smoky haze.
Will you explore the smooth skin
that’s in a secret place?
Will you do everything humanly
possible to become a member
of the animal race?”

XEROX

seeing your eyes on strangers' faces
greeting/cards and photographs
evokes stimulus/response wetness
seeps between my legs/as sparkling
eyes brown sugar shine flicker/
vanish/please pass the wine.

II

yes, yes, the river knows
so Xerox a smile.
polish your toes.
we'll meet again
where the four winds blow.

OH, WHAT CARELESS

TOUCHING

that dances us apart.
We are young, and thoughts
are strong, but we have
fragile hearts.
Oh, what a noble profile
that can't not revile
a moment of a life.
Oh, what odd qualities we search for
in a husband or a wife.

THE VIRGIN WHORE

My love is a virgin, my love is a whore-
One I loathe, and one I adore
I'm betwixt and bewildered
I'm bothered beyond reason
because my mind says one thing
and my cock plays treason.
I love the maiden in shining white;
I love the woman in flaming red,
and when she dances in the dark of
night
I tend to nobly lose my head.
Trying to love the two,
I've tried to love none-
I'm seeking an ideal,
in which they are one.

A SLICE OF LIFE

Everybody likes pizza…
It goes well with the blues,
like baby shoes.
Bronze them when you're through
eating out the shoelaces
and peeking through the pepperoni:

Looking for any soul that's been stole,
that's wandering around today on 6 inch
heels.

A good baby now a bad woman,
she may be a hooker but she's human
and when she smiles the harmonica cries
the way her passion does, it lies

right in the laps of those who buy.
Yes, we all have hard lives, but
do we get ours delivered? By a pimp?
No, it's the pizza man with our take-out
order.

ARCHETYPE

I cast for you,

you break out of an archetype,
a set role, a stereotype
We know
love; we've known none.

You take my hand and run
along to make daisies of my heart
in a field. Laughing, we sit;
talking, we yield.

You are the sun shining in your magnificence
I cast for your smiling face since
you're the sun whose fire burned
secrets only
wood could learn.

GRIEF

This is the crying that comes
without tears,
when raw feeling is left,
numb in your breast.

this is the mourning , until it
abates, these are the mourners,
in grief at the wake.

here is feeling that lives on
in vain,
'til tears pass by
and there is no more pain.

FOR PETER

I'm looking straight ahead
as things go through my mind.
Tears weren't what you wished for me,
Your thoughts were always kind.

II

I saw you looking longingly
perhaps I misread your simple glance –
at the same instant we looked away
as if by choice; it was but chance.

I'm filling in the pieces
before time dims what I see,
although I know we never happened
and that we can never be.

WITHOUT

Like a bottle, hollow
with nothing to swallow;
A paragon of virtue,
a nest of emptiness –
My mind feels nothing
when you touch my breast.
I'm a vase with no flowers,
a mouth with no tongue
to burst forth in beauty
with tenderness sung.

I'm a portion of sky where no breeze
can stir, a moment of silence
when deafness occurs.

Like a rock on a hillside
clinging to the sun,
we too stay separate
when we become one.
What kind of experience
can I hold in my hands,
when ashes I have, to
build castles of sand.

I WISH YOU THANKS
FOR THE WISE WORDS

that whispered touch
the fragrant leaves.

So, now begin – pull away from me,
a bird flying readily
over our once barren earth
where plants have gone to seed.
Go – plant other ground
to fill with other needs.

LIFE

A flowing of love,
a feeling that's clear
that speaks to us of
how to get there from here.
A loving, tender feeling
for a special sound
that gets distant away
and comes back around,
a gentle touch
that feels of a breeze,
whistling & stirring like
the sound of the trees.

THE FAIRY LEAVES

You can see a tree
and not be amazed;
See a leaf
and be almost dazed
from infinite beauty in unique forms,
blown about by autumn's storms.
The colors fade when leaves are brittle,
but, in the sun they really glitter.
    Think
they wait for winter snows
to be wrapped around as winter clothes
by the fairies that made these leaves,
bedazzling us with gifts like these.

MOONGLOW

I watch the moon change
its shape at night,
A glowing orb of mystic light
ever changing through a starry sky;
a lantern circling Earth up high –
the oldest glow that's known to Man,
a wondrous show, that since began
has brought forth milky-shadows
in a collage of night-
which give to the darkness
a reflection of light.

FIRST POEM (AGE 6)

I lay in bed
looking at the stars
thinking of buses
and all kinds of cars.
I think about the growth
of this Earth,
of living, of dying and also of birth.
I lay in bed thinking
of all Man has made,
that it all started out
with Man in a cave.